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ABSTRACT

A study evaluated the Reading Alignment Program (which targets priority reading skills and encourages the use of high-performance instructional methods) in the Kansas City, Missouri, School District. Data were collected from the first and third grades of 16 selected schools. The schools were visited to determine the level of implementation of the program, program participants completed questionnaires, and district-wide Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Missouri Mastery and Achievement Test (MMAT) scores were analyzed. Results indicated that: (1) other district priorities impeded implementation of the program; (2) no improvement was seen in the percentage of schools in which all teachers used the Computer Managed Instruction (CMI) system, compared to a previous summative evaluation of the program; (3) one-third of the teachers continued to teach most, if not all, of the skills covered in the reading manuals; (4) CMI operators reported satisfaction with support for the CMI system; (5) a marked improvement in availability of the system was noted for the 1990-1991 school year; and (6) students from high-implementation schools significantly outperformed students from low-implementation schools at both grade levels and for all tests, with the exception of reading at the third-grade level, for which there was no significant difference. Recommendations suggest that the school district continue to provide implementation support for the program, and that scheduled reading time in school be protected. (Nine tables of data are included, and a list of the indicators of implementation for the Reading Alignment program is attached.)
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Summative Evaluation of the Reading Alignment Program

1990-1991

Evaluation Office

The School District of Kansas City, Missouri

August 1991

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Summative Evaluation of the Reading Alignment Program

1990-1991

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August 1991

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary iii

Introduction 1

Program Description 1

Evaluation Design 1

Results 2

- Implementation 2
- Perceptions 8
- Achievement 17

Conclusions and Recommendations 20

References 22

Acknowledgements 22

Appendix 23

List of Tables

Table

1 Elementary Reading Alignment, 1990-1991, Implementation in Schools 4

2 Elementary Reading Alignment, 1990-1991, Implementation in Classrooms 7

3 Elementary Reading Alignment, 1990-1991, Accuracy of Marked Manuals 8

4 Elementary Reading Alignment, 1990-1991, Principal & Instructional Assistant Perceptions 9

5 Elementary Reading Alignment, 1990-1991, CMI Operator Perceptions 10

6 Elementary Reading Alignment, 1990-1991, Teacher Perceptions 12

7 Elementary Reading Alignment, District ITBS Reading, Language, and Vocabulary Percentile Ranks Based on Mean Grade Equivalents 18

8 Elementary Reading Alignment, Summary Data, 1991 ITBS Reading, Language, and Vocabulary Tests Analysis of Variance with High Implementing and Low Implementing Schools 19

9 Elementary Reading Alignment, Comparison of State and District MMAT Reading/Language Arts Average Scale Scores, Grade Three 20

Executive Summary

The attached report is a summative evaluation of the Reading Alignment Program in the Kansas City, Missouri, School District which was in its sixth year of implementation during the 1990-1991 school year. The evaluation study focused on implementation; achievement levels in reading, language arts, and vocabulary; and on exploring differences in reading scores for schools with high implementation of the program and schools with low implementation of the program.

The Reading Alignment Program was designed to be implemented in three phases, which were to be fully in place by the 1990-1991 school year. In the first phase, reading objectives were aligned with the district's standardized reading tests. The second phase directed attention to improving comprehension instruction; and the third phase was to focus on remediation and enrichment.

The first phase of the program was completed in the 1987-1988 school year. At the outset of the second phase, the program ran into implementation difficulties, resulting in a "scaled down" activation of the second phase. A number of factors impeded the implementation of the program during the past three years, including other district priorities.

Sixteen schools were selected for inclusion in the study. The schools in the sample which showed a high level of implementation of the Reading Alignment Program significantly outperformed the schools which showed a low level of implementation on five of the six measures explored.

Two recommendations were formulated from the results of the study. One dealth with the need for the district to continue to provide implementation support for programs which are instituted by the district. The other focused on the need to protect the scheduled reading time in schools.

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION
OF THE
READING ALIGNMENT PROGRAM

Introduction

During the 1990-1991 school year, the Reading Alignment Program of the Kansas City, Missouri, School District was in its sixth year of implementation. Since summative evaluations are conducted every three years, this report will be summative in nature. After a description of the program and a presentation of the design for the study , the results of the study will be discussed.

Program Description

According to the statement of purpose for the program, Reading Alignment targets priority reading skills and encourages the use of high-performance instructional methods. The program was originally composed of three phases (AFIRM, IMPACT, and ADVANCE). The first phase, AFIRM, included alignment of learning objectives, instructional methods, materials, and tests. The number of skills taught was reduced in this first phase in order to enhance concentration on the aligned skills and to allow time for reading comprehension instruction. In the second phase, IMPACT, the emphasis was to be placed on "Aligning Comprehension Thrusts." According to one program report, this phase "focused on improving comprehension instruction and enhancing skills applications...." In the third phase, ADVANCE, special emphasis was to be placed on remediation for students scoring in the lower percentile of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills reading tests and on enrichment for students scoring above the 65th percentile.

Phase one began in the 1985-1986 school year and ran through the 1987-1988 school year (Nelson, 1988). The program was designed to be implemented fully in all three phases by the 1990-1991 school year.

Evaluation Design

For the summative evaluation of the Reading Alignment Program, the following questions were addressed:

1. Is the program being implemented as planned?

2. What are the ITBS and MMAT achievement levels in reading and language arts for the district?

3. Are there differences in reading scores for schools with high implementation of and perceptions about the Reading Alignment Program and schools with low implementation of and perceptions about the Reading Alignment Program?

Sixteen schools were selected for the study. These schools had a variety of 1990 reading scores at the first- and third-grade levels, percentages of minority enrollment, and percentages of students on the free lunch program. In order to make data collection more manageable, two grade levels were chosen for the focus of the study. At the suggestion of reading staff, first and third grades were chosen.

To answer the first question, schools were visited to determine the level of implementation of the Reading Alignment Program on a number of implementation variables. Current implementation practices were compared with program descriptions. Teachers, Computer Managed Instruction (CMI) operators, principals, and instructional assistants (IA's) were given questionnaires to determine perceptions about the program. In regard to the second question, district-wide ITBS (reading, language arts, and vocabulary) and MMAT (reading/language arts) scores are presented.

Descriptive statistics were used as appropriate to summarize achievement test and perception data. An analysis of variance procedure was used to determine if significant differences in reading scores exist between high and low implementing elementary schools.

Results

Implementation

As mentioned above, the Reading Alignment Program was designed to be implemented fully (all three phases) by the 1990-1991 school year. Phase one began in the 1985-1986 school year and ran through the 1987-1988 school year (Nelson, 1988). Implementation of the program stalled as it moved into the second phase. Although, according to program leadership, 70 school staff were trained in the second phase (IMPACT) during the 1987-1988 school year, in the 1988-1989 school year, the second phase was "scaled down ... because no additional desegregation funding was sought or provided" (Reading Department, 1988). During the 1990-1991 school year, Saturday morning training was provided for teachers, but participation in the training was voluntary. A schedule of 17 Saturday workshops was provided as documentation. Program leadership reported that, in

all, 30 workshops were held, with an approximate average attendance of 70. Program leadership indicated that implementation of the IMPACT phase was "spotty."

According to program leadership, a change in the meeting structure for IA meetings also fed into the "scaling down" of the IMPACT phase. Since a different department convened the meetings, the reading department was not able to meet with the IA's as frequently as had been the practice previously. In addition, according to program staff, although principals and IA's had materials regarding the IMPACT phase of the program, no funding was available for handouts or notebooks for teachers. According to program leadership, implementation of the third phase was never initiated.

After the initial development of the aligned objectives, the marking of manuals and the development of the CMI tests, a new edition of the ITBS test was adopted. The program was not updated in response to the new ITBS test form. Program leadership indicated that there was a desire to revise CMI tests but that the funding was not available to do this. Therefore, during the 1990-1991 school year, a system was still in place that was designed on the basis of an out-dated form of the ITBS test.

During the 1990-1991 school year, a new basal series was adopted for the 1991-1992 school year. Because of the priority of this effort and the impact a new series would have on the alignment process, further efforts to update the alignment of the current basal series to match the new form of the ITBS test or to be insistent about teachers implementing the current alignment was curtailed.

In conversations with reading staff, indicators of implementation of the program as it currently stands were identified. Methods of measuring these indicators were then developed and tested.

As mentioned above, 16 schools were selected for the sample used in this study. Within the schools, three teachers at the first-grade level and three teachers at the third-grade level were randomly selected to be used when classroom data needed to be collected for the study. A few of the schools had fewer than three teachers at the two grade levels used in the study; hence, the total number of teachers in the sample was 84. School-wide indicators of implementation were collected in interviews with principals and teachers and through observation and review of documentation. The results are contained in Table 1.

The Reading Alignment Program emphasized the scheduling of times for reading instruction, for silent sustained reading, and for library use. As can be seen from Table 1,

Table 1

Elementary Reading Alignment, 1990-1991
Implementation in Schools
(N = 16 Schools)

Indicators of Implementation	Percentages
Have an established time for reading throughout the school	69%
Silent sustained reading:	
Have an established time for silent sustained reading through the school	56%
Teachers have individual schedules for silent sustained reading	38%
Schools with no schedule for silent sustained reading	6%
Have an established schedule for library use	100%
Library in use at scheduled times:	
Both times observed	81%
One of two times observed	13%
Neither time observed	6%
Grade-level whole class instruction:	
Schools with 1st grade teachers agreeing on the focus of the whole class lesson	19%
Schools with 3rd grade teachers agreeing on the focus of the whole class lesson	19%
Use of CMI:	
Schools with all teachers using CMI	69%
Schools with all teachers in sample having CMI records	75%
Schools with all sampled 1st-grade teachers showing regular use of CMI (at least every 2 weeks)	31%
Schools with all sampled 3rd-grade teachers showing regular use of CMI (at least every 3 weeks)	50%

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent.

two-thirds of the schools in the sample (69%) scheduled a school-wide time for reading instruction (as will be seen later in the perception section, all but 1% of the individual teachers indicated that they had a regularly scheduled time for reading instruction).

According to principals at the schools, just over half of the schools in the sample had an established time for silent sustained reading throughout the school. However, when teachers were asked about the frequency and timing of their independent recreational reading (on the teacher questionnaire, detailed in the perception section), half or more of the teachers (50%-82%) at five of the 16 schools said they provided this opportunity daily at a scheduled time. At the 11 remaining schools, less than half of the teachers reported having a scheduled time daily for independent reading. These teacher responses seem to conflict with principal data regarding scheduled silent reading time for the whole school. Overall, 40% of the teachers from the 16 schools responded that they included daily

independent recreational reading at a scheduled time. An additional quarter of the teachers indicated that they allowed for this activity daily but that the independent reading was not scheduled.

All of the 16 schools in the sample had an established time for library use in the school. In each school, the library was visited during two times when classes were scheduled. In 13 of the schools (81%), the library was in use both of the times observed. In one school (6%), the library was not used during either of the times observed.

Program staff hoped to see independent reading and research and reporting projects taking place in the libraries, rather than having library activities limited to library skills and media presentations. In the observations, students were reading or looking at books in 19% of the visits and doing research in one of the visits (3%). Other prevalent activities include watching filmstrips (during 41% of the visits), checking out books (during 38% of the visits), learning library skills and listening to stories (each occurred during 25% of the visits).

A third of the teachers (32%) reported that the regularly scheduled times in the library included research projects in the variety of activities. A fifth of the teachers (19%), however, indicated that the regularly scheduled library times were for book check-out only and nearly half of the teachers (45%) reported that the variety of library activities did not include research projects.

Program staff indicated that they encouraged whole class reading lessons at least weekly. The focus of whole class instruction was to be identified by grade level and implemented by all teachers in the grade level. Randomly selected teachers from the first and third grades were asked if their grade-level team identified grade-level skills for weekly whole class lessons, and what the skill was that had been identified for the current week. In response, first-grade teachers agreed on the grade-level skill in 19% of the schools, and third-grade teachers agreed on the grade-level skill in 19% of the schools. In the other schools, teachers may have said no weekly grade-level skills was identified, disagreed on whether or not grade-level skills were identified weekly, or disagreed on the current identified skill. On the teacher questionnaire (detailed in the perception section), all classroom teachers in the sixteen schools were asked about the frequency with which they used whole class reading lessons. Most of the teachers (93%) reported having whole class lessons at least weekly. These results seem to indicate that the "weekly" aspect of the whole class lesson has taken

root but that the intended "grade level identification of the skill to be taught" was not implemented uniformly.

All elementary teachers (grades one through five) were to use the CMI system regularly for scoring skills tests. In two-thirds (69%) of the schools, all teachers (first through fifth grades) had used the CMI system at least once at the time of data collection, as documented by CMI records. It is interesting to note that the *Longitudinal Evaluation of the Elementary Reading Alignment Program* (Nelson, 1988) reported that 69% of the schools indicated that all teachers were using the system. When the CMI records were checked for the first- and third-grade teachers in the sample, 75% of the schools showed all of the sample teachers having CMI records.

Reading and CMI coordinators agreed that, for first-grade teachers, a test should be given at least every two weeks and at least every three weeks for third-grade teachers. A third of the schools showed the appropriate frequency for each of the three first-grade teachers in the sample and half of the schools showed the appropriate frequency for each of the three third-grade teachers in the sample. In a self-report of frequency of CMI use, 18% of the teachers reported having students complete CMI tests less frequently than every three weeks. Half of the teachers (51%) reported having students complete a test at least every two weeks or every week.

Table 2 shows the results of data regarding implementation which were collected in classrooms. When visits were made during the scheduled reading times, each of the classrooms was engaged in reading activities. In about half the classrooms (48%), whole group lessons were taking place.

One of the desired indicators of implementation of the Reading Alignment Program was minimal use of non-basal worksheets during reading time. No worksheets were seen during 61% of the reading lessons observed. Use of non-basal worksheets (either alone or in combination with basal worksheets) was seen in a total of 22% of the classrooms. On the teacher questionnaire (detailed in the perception section), a third of the teachers responded that they used non-basal worksheets three to four times a week or daily.

Implementation of the Reading Alignment Program also included the presence of a literary environment in the classroom, according to reading staff. As defined by reading staff, a literary environment included at least 50 books for reading (seen in 79% of the classrooms), a variety of magazines (seen in 50% of the classrooms), newspapers available

Table 2

Elementary Reading Alignment, 1990-1991
Implementation in Classrooms
(N = 84 Classrooms)

Indicators of Implementation	Percentages
Classrooms observed reading during scheduled reading time	100%
Classrooms with whole group lesson during observed reading lesson	48%
Use of worksheets during observed reading lessons:	
none used	61%
basal	18%
non-basal	18%
both basal and non-basal	4%
Indicators of a literary environment in the classroom:	
at least 50 books for reading	79%
a variety of magazines (more than one type)	50%
newspapers available	32%
reference works available	94%
Classrooms with grade level curriculum guide	89%
Classrooms with reading alignment procedural manuals	80%

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent.

(seen in 32% of the classrooms), and reference works available (seen in 94% of the classrooms).

According to reading staff, a grade level curriculum guide (the Reading/Language Arts Elementary Handbook) and a Reading Alignment procedural manual were to be in each classroom as a part of the Reading Alignment Program. These were seen in 89% and 80% of the classrooms, respectively. These figures were closely duplicated by responses from the teacher questionnaire (detailed in the perception section), in which 81% of the teachers indicated that they had a copy of the Elementary Handbook and 83% indicated that they had a Reading Alignment procedural manual. Reading staff explained that some teachers new to the district may not have received manuals during this school year since the mail room began charging for copies after the reading department budget had been established with no category to cover this expense.

At the inception of the Reading Alignment Program, the aligned objectives in teachers' reading manuals were to be marked. This marking was a signal to teachers to be sure to

teach a particular objective since it was aligned with the standardized tests used by the district. Each manual used by the 84 teachers in the sample was checked in three locations for accuracy of the marking. Table 3 shows the results of the 189 manuals checked. While most were accurately checked (87%), the percentage accurately checked had slipped slightly from three years ago, when 90% were accurately marked (Nelson, 1988). Ten percent of the manuals were unmarked (up from 5% unmarked in 1988). This closely parallels responses on the teacher questionnaire (detailed in the perception section): a total of 14% of the teachers indicated that some of their manuals were marked and some were not (11%), that none of their manuals were marked (2%), or that they did not know if the manuals were marked (1%).

Perceptions

Principals, instructional assistants, CMI operators, and classroom teachers responded to questionnaires regarding their perceptions of the Reading Alignment Program. The results appear in this section. Responses to open-ended questions were categorized. Any category that received comments from at least 10% of the respondents is mentioned in the report.

Results of the principal and instructional assistant questionnaire are in Table 4. While most of the respondents (91%) felt that the Reading Alignment Program was being fully implemented in their school, about a quarter of the respondents (22%) felt that there was full implementation of the IMPACT phase of the, with two-thirds (69%) feeling that the IMPACT phase was being partially implemented. A part of the implementation of the IMPACT phase of the program was peer partnership. Although 45% of the principals and

Table 3

Elementary Reading Alignment, 1990-1991
Accuracy of Marked Manuals
(N = 189)

Accuracy	Percentages
Accurate markings	87%
Partially accurate markings	3%
Unmarked	10%

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent. A manual was checked for each current reading group in the classrooms of the 84 teachers in the sample.

Table 4

Elementary Reading Alignment, 1990-1991
Principal & Instructional Assistant Perceptions
(N = 32)

Item Content	Response Alternatives	%
1. To what extent is the Reading Alignment Program being implemented?	A. Full implementation	91%
	B. Partial implementation	6%
	C. Minimal implementation	3%
	D. No implementation	-----
	E. Unknown	-----
2. To what extent is the IMPACT phase of the Reading Alignment Program being implemented at this school?	A. Full implementation	22%
	B. Partial implementation	69%
	C. Minimal implementation	3%
	D. No implementation	-----
	E. Unknown	6%
3. Do you have any Peer Partners at this school?	A. Yes	45%
	B. No	41%
	C. Unknown	14%
4. How prepared are you to answer teachers' questions about Reading Alignment?	A. Very prepared	69%
	B. Prepared	31%
	C. Unprepared	-----
	D. Very unprepared	-----
5. How prepared are you to answer teachers' questions about the CMI system?	A. Very prepared	69%
	B. Prepared	31%
	C. Unprepared	-----
	D. Very unprepared	-----
6. What effect does Reading Alignment have on reading instruction in your school?	A. Very positive	31%
	B. Positive	66%
	C. No effect	3%
	D. Negative	-----
	E. Very negative	-----
7. What effect does the CMI system have on reading instruction in your school?	A. Very positive	37%
	B. Positive	59%
	C. No effect	4%
	D. Negative	-----
	E. Very negative	-----

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent.

IA's said peer partners existed at their school, 14% responded that they did not know whether any partnerships were at the school.

All principals and IA's felt prepared to answer teachers' questions about Reading Alignment and about the CMI system (91% of the teachers felt they usually or always were able to get Reading Alignment questions answered at their school and 93% felt they could

get their CMI questions answered at their school). Almost all principals and IA's thought the Reading Alignment and the CMI system had positive effects on the reading instruction at their school.

When asked in an open-ended question to identify the strengths of the Reading Alignment Program, 44% of the principals and IA's noted that it helped prepare students for testing. While principals and IA's identified hindrances to implementing the program and changes they would like to see in the program, no category of hindrance or desired change was mentioned by 10% of the responders.

CMI operators responded to a questionnaire developed with their responsibilities in mind. Responses are found in Table 5 (at one of the 16 schools, two CMI operators responded to the questionnaire). All were satisfied with the way the system had operated

Table 5

Elementary Reading Alignment, 1990-1991
CMI Operator Perceptions
(N = 17)

Item Content	Response Alternatives	%
1. How satisfied are you with the way the CMI system has operated during the current year?	A. Very satisfied	77%
	B. Satisfied	24%
	C. Dissatisfied	-----
	D. Very dissatisfied	-----
2. How satisfied are you with the support you have received this year from the district CMI office?	A. Very satisfied	88%
	B. Satisfied	12%
	C. Dissatisfied	-----
	D. Very dissatisfied	-----
3. How frequently have you received visits from district CMI staff?	A. At least once each month	65%
	B. At least once a quarter	24%
	C. Once this year	-----
	D. No visits this year	12%
4. Do you have sufficient time to score and report CMI test results?	A. Always	53%
	B. Usually	29%
	C. Sometimes	12%
	D. Rarely	-----
	E. Never	6%
5. Is there an additional person at this school trained to use the CMI system?	A. Yes	77%
	B. No	12%
	C. Unknown	12%
6. Have there been any times during this school year when the CMI system has been out of service because of disrepair or theft?	A. Yes	24%
	B. No	77%
	C. Unknown	-----

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent. At one school, two CMI operators responded to the questionnaire.

during the 1990-1991 school year and with the support they had received this year from the district CMI office. Visits had been made by CMI staff to two-thirds of the schools at least monthly, according to CMI operators. Two operators indicated that no visits had been made during the year. One of these was from the school at which two operators responded to the questionnaire; the other operator at the school indicated that visits had been made once a quarter. CMI staff stated that visits had been made to all schools in the district but one, and phone contact had been made with the operator at that school. At the unvisited school, the operator was a teacher and visits had to be specially arranged around classroom duties. Also, this operator was well organized and knew the system well, according to CMI staff. It is important to note that all operators were satisfied with the support received.

Program staff indicated a desire to have at least two people at every school trained to use the CMI system. At three-quarters of the schools, this was the case, according to the CMI operators who responded to the questionnaire.

A quarter of the operators said the system had been out of service because of disrepair or theft. This percentage compares favorably with the two-thirds (68%) who had experienced at least some interruption in service due to theft or disrepair in the 1987-1988 school year (Nelson, 1988). Two of the four operators who noted the system had been out of service during 1990-1991 said it had been unusable for two or three days. A third indicated that the school had waited a month for a computer to be delivered from "downtown." The fourth did not specify a length of time.

Classroom teachers who taught reading in grades one through five also responded to a questionnaire. The results are reported in Table 6. All but 1% reported having a regularly scheduled time for reading. A third of the teachers (37%), however, indicated that the scheduled reading time was disrupted for other activities at least weekly.

Program staff indicated that they had been encouraging teachers to reduce the number of reading groups in a classroom to three or less. The effort seems to have been quite successful, with 92% of the teachers indicating that they had three or fewer groups.

Most of the teachers were familiar with the Reading Alignment Program. However, 5% were not familiar with the program and a fifth of the teachers (19%) indicated that they had not been trained in aspects of the program or did not know whether or not they had been trained.

Table 6

Elementary Reading Alignment, 1990-1991
Teacher Perceptions
(N = 252)

Item Content	Response Alternatives	%
1. Do you have a regularly scheduled time for reading?	A. Yes	99%
	B. No	1%
2. How often is your scheduled reading time disrupted for other activities?	A. Nearly every day	7%
	B Several times a week	11%
	C At least once a week	19%
	D Rarely	59%
	E Never	5%
3. How many reading groups do you currently have?	A. 1	12%
	B. 2	48%
	C. 3	32%
	D. 4	5%
	E. More than 4	2%
4. How often do you generally teach a whole class reading lesson?	A. At least once a week	93%
	B. At least once every other week	3%
	C. At least once every third week	2%
	D. At least once every month	-----
	E. Less often than once a month	2%
5. How often do you generally have the students complete pages in the basal workbook?	A. Daily	19%
	B. 3 - 4 times each week	39%
	C. 1 - 2 times each week	39%
	D. Less often than once a week	4%
6. How often do you generally have the students complete worksheets (other than the basal workbook)?	A. Daily	14%
	B. 3 - 4 times each week	18%
	C. 1 - 2 times each week	44%
	D. Less often than once a week	24%
7. How often do you generally have your students do independent recreational reading (non-basal, silent, sustained reading)?	A. Daily at a scheduled time	40%
	B. Daily at whatever time fits into the schedule	25%
	C. 3 - 4 times a week	23%
	D. 1 - 2 times a week	10%
	E. Less often than once a week	2%
8. Are you familiar with the Elementary Reading Alignment Program?	A. Yes, very	64%
	B. Yes, somewhat	31%
	C. I've heard of it, but don't really know what it is	3%
	D. I haven't heard of it	2%
9. Have you received training in the Elementary Reading Alignment Program?	A. Yes, at my school	38%
	B. Yes, at district-wide in-service	19%
	C. Yes, both at my school and at district-wide in-service	24%
	D. No	15%
	E. Unknown	4%
10. To what extent are you implementing the Reading Alignment Program?	A. Full implementation	68%
	B. Partial implementation	26%
	C. Minimal implementation	2%
	D. No implementation	2%
	E. Unknown	2%

Table 6 (Continued)

Elementary Reading Alignment, 1990-1991
Teacher Perceptions
(N = 252)

Item Content	Response Alternatives	%
11. Are the reading manual(s) you use for your reading group(s) marked with the aligned objectives?	A. All are marked	86%
	B. Some are, some are not marked	11%
	C. None are marked	2%
	D. Unknown	1%
12. To this point in the school year, which of the following statements best describes the way in which you have taught the story lessons in the Houghton Mifflin basal(s) for your reading group(s)?	A. I have taught each story lesson in the basal(s)	67%
	B. I have taught selected story lessons in the basal(s)	33%
13. Have your reading groups read supplemental stories (outside the basal stories)?	A. Yes	80%
	B. No	20%
14. To this point in the school year, which of the following statements best describes the way in which you have taught the skills in the Houghton Mifflin manual(s) for your reading group(s)?	A. I have taught each skill in the manual(s)	12%
	B. I have taught most of the skills in the manual(s)	20%
	C. I have taught the starred skills plus a limited number of other skills	57%
	D. I have taught only the starred skills	11%
	E. I have taught less than the starred skills	-----
15. Do you think more skills should be taught?	A. Yes	43%
	B. No	57%
16. Do you have a copy of the Reading/Language Arts Elementary Handbook developed by the district (yellow cover)?	A. Yes	81%
	B. No	15%
	C. Unknown	4%
17. Do you have a copy of the Procedural Manual for the Reading Alignment Program (purple cover)?	A. Yes	83%
	B. No	15%
	C. Unknown	2%
18. Are you able to get Reading Alignment questions answered from a resource within your school?	A. Always	61%
	B. Usually	30%
	C. Sometimes	8%
	D. Rarely	2%
	E. Never	-----
19. What effect does the Reading Alignment Program have on your reading instruction?	A. Very positive	22%
	B. Positive	55%
	C. No effect	16%
	D. Negative	7%
	E. Very negative	-----
20. Have you received training in the IMPACT phase of the Reading Alignment Program?	A. Yes, this school year (1990-1991)	11%
	B. Yes, last school year (1989-1990)	27%
	C. No	47%
	D. Unknown	15%
21. To what extent are you implementing IMPACT?	A. Full implementation	11%
	B. Partial implementation	22%
	C. Minimal implementation	7%
	D. No implementation	18%
	E. Unknown	41%

Table 6 (Continued)

Teacher Perceptions of the Reading Alignment Program
(N = 252)

Item Content	Response Alternatives	%
22. Do you know what a Peer Partner is?	A. Yes	62%
	B. No	38%
23. Are you or do you have a Peer Partner?	A. Yes	24%
	B. No	76%
24. How often do students in your class generally complete a CMI reading test?	A. At least one test each week	7%
	B. At least one test every two weeks	44%
	C. At least one test every three weeks	32%
	D. At least one test every month	13%
	E. Less frequently than once a month	5%
25. What amount of time does it generally take to receive the results of a CMI reading test once you have turned it into the CMI operator.	A. The same day	5%
	B. Within 24 hours	38%
	C. Within 2 or 3 days	39%
	D. Within 4 or 5 days	9%
	D. After one week	9%
26. Has the information provided by the CMI reading test reports been useful?	A. Very useful	26%
	B. Useful	34%
	C. Somewhat useful	29%
	D. Not at all useful	11%
27. Are you able to get CMI questions answered from a resource within your school?	A. Always	63%
	B. Usually	30%
	C. Sometimes	7%
	D. Rarely	------
	E. Never	------
28. What effect does the CMI system have on your reading instruction?	A. Very positive	20%
	B. Positive	44%
	C. No effect	23%
	D. Negative	11%
	E. Very negative	2%
29. Which of the following statements most nearly describes your use of the library?	A. Regularly scheduled times for book check-out only	19%
	B. Regularly scheduled times for a variety of activities led by the librarian (including research projects)	32%
	C. Regularly scheduled times for a variety of activities led by the librarian (not including research projects)	45%
	D. No regularly scheduled times, but we can sign up to go when we want to	-----
	E. Other	3%

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent.

One of the purposes of the alignment process was to reduce the skills teachers were required to teach. When asked about the way in which they had taught the skills in the reading manuals, two-thirds of the teachers (68%) indicated that they had taught only the starred skills (the aligned/marked skills in the manuals) or that they had taught the starred skills plus a limited number of additional skills. The remaining third (32%) reported teaching each skill or most of the skills. In addition, nearly half (43%) felt that more skills should be taught.

Program leadership indicated that, while only aligned objectives needed to be taught, each story in the basal reader was to be read by students (or supplementary stories substituted). Two-thirds of the teachers reported teaching each story and 80% reported adding supplemental stories.

While nearly all the principals and IA's felt the Reading Alignment Program and the CMI system had had positive effects on the reading instruction at their school, positive responses among teachers were not as plentiful. Three-quarters (77%) of the teachers thought the Reading Alignment Program had had positive effects on their reading instruction, but the remaining quarter (23%) felt that the program had had a negative effect or no effect. Two-thirds (64%) felt that the CMI system had had positive effects on their reading instruction, but the remaining third (36%) felt that the system had had no effect or a negative effect. While 89% of the teachers felt that the information provided by the CMI had had some degree of usefulness, 11% felt that the information was not at all useful.

Program leadership had an expectation that the results of CMI tests would be returned to teachers within 24 hours. That was the case for 43% of the teachers. Leadership expressed disappointment that, for so many teachers (57%), tests were not returned for two or three days or more.

Teacher responses to questions about the IMPACT phase of the Reading Alignment Program fit with program leadership's assessment of minimal implementation of this phase. Little more than a third (38%) said they had received training in this phase of the program. Nearly two-thirds said that they had not been trained or they did not know if they had been trained. While a third of the teachers indicated that they were implementing IMPACT at least partially, a quarter reported minimal or no implementation, and 41% did not know whether they were implementing this phase of the program. Over a third of the teachers

(38%) did not know what a peer partner was, and three-quarters (76%) did not have a peer partner.

In an open-ended question, teachers were asked how they would describe the Reading Alignment program to someone unfamiliar with the program. About a quarter of the teachers (23%) gave answers that alluded to teaching selected skills or to teaching skills related to the ITBS. Examples include "skills which are important to obtain mastery on ITBS are emphasized170; "follow what is aligned because that is to be tested"; and "reading department has determined skills which will be taught and tested." The remaining 77% of the teachers did not give pertinent descriptions of the program. "Skills are made very useful with children"; "it is a program to help pace your class and stay on a schedule"; "you align the skills you teach in reading with the skills you teach in other subject areas" are examples of less adequate descriptions.

Reading Alignment leadership identified several strengths of the program, such as providing clear objectives for student learning; frequent monitoring of achievement; mastery of instructional practices, including design for re-teaching and enrichment; and numerous opportunities for teachers to develop, learn, and apply instructional strategies effectively.

Early in the 1990-1991 year, program leadership pointed out that funding for duplication of Reading Alignment materials was non-existent and that funding for staff development had been substantially reduced. Program leadership expressed concern that management in the district had diverted the energy and resources of the Reading Department away from the Reading Alignment Program and focused it elsewhere. Program leadership also was aware that the impending change of basal readers impacted on teacher follow-through with the Reading Alignment strategies during the 1990-1991 school year.

Leadership was asked about desired changes in the Reading Alignment Program for the 1991-1992 school year. Because of the change in the adopted basal series, several changes are "givens." In the new series, skills are grouped in "clusters," meaning that the units are organized around the literature, with several skills linked to a particular literary work. Some skills will be targeted for direct teaching; others will be taught through modeling. Literature and writing will be the basis for application of the skills learned (a journal and composition book will replace a workbook with skills sheets). Because of this, writing and composition will become a part of the core instructional program.

Rather than forming two or three distinct reading groups within a classroom, the groupings will be flexible, with activity centers set up in the classroom for students to work on the various skills. For example, there will be an author's chair for students to read their own creations aloud to other students, a writing corner, a computer station for composition, etc.

There will be fewer short tests with the new basal series. Instead of testing every two to three weeks, as with the current CMI testing system, a survey of skills test will be given quarterly. This test will be scored with the CMI system. In addition, theme tests will be given (approximately seven per grade). Since the theme tests have multiple right answers, they initially will be hand scored by the teachers, until the CMI system has the capability of scoring multiple right answers.

In addition to the "given" changes that come with the format of the new basal series, leadership identified several desired changes. Program leadership hopes that five of the reading resource staff (the four current Reading Alignment resource teachers and one district resource teacher) will be devoted to the implementation of the new program. The two remaining resource teachers will focus on reading at the middle school and senior high levels.

Program leadership also hopes that reading and language arts time will be combined in classrooms across the district so that there is an integration of reading and language arts instruction. An additional hope is that any adopted spelling, language arts, or handwriting texts will have a philosophy and format consistent with the new reading program so that there is a focus on aligned achievement. The underlying desire is that there will be a maintenance of aligned focus without an overemphasis on aligned skills so that the literature is allowed to drive the program.

Achievement

District elementary reading, language, and vocabulary achievement as shown by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) for the year prior to the first year of implementation for the Reading Alignment Program, as well as for the most recent four years of the program are traced in Table 7. Percentile ranks, converted from mean grade equivalents are shown.

Looking at Table 7, one sees consistent improvement in percentile ranks at all grade levels between the 1985 ranks and the 1991 ranks. The differences between the 1990 and the 1991 ranks show slight decreases in all three 1991 percentile ranks at the first-grade

Table 7

Elementary Reading Alignment
District ITBS Reading, Language, and Vocabulary
Percentile Ranks
Based on Mean Grade Equivalents

Test Grade Level	1985	1988	1989	1990	1991
Reading					
First	47	45	52	56	53
Second	36	45	47	52	51
Third	33	36	38	42	44
Fourth	31	37	39	38	39
Fifth	32	36	38	40	40
Language					
First	---	52	62	66	64
Second	---	43	50	56	58
Third	32	37	39	43	45
Fourth	38	38	41	42	42
Fifth	32	32	35	39	35
Vocabulary					
First	---	64	71	74	73
Second	---	58	60	65	64
Third	50	51	53	56	57
Fourth	46	49	49	50	49
Fifth	45	48	52	51	48

Note: All percentile ranks are based on 1985 norms.

level, slight increases in all three 1991 percentile ranks at the third-grade level, and mixed results at the other three grade levels.

In order to determine if reading-related ITBS scores of students from schools which have a high level of implementation of the Reading Alignment Program differ from scores of students from schools which have a low level of implementation, the 16 schools in the study were ranked on implementation data. Data were used from 14 variables which had been weighted by program leadership according to the degree to which the variable was an indicator of program implementation (see Appendix A). The scores of students from the six schools with the highest degree of implementation according to this ranking were compared to the scores of students with the lowest degree of implementation using the analysis of variance procedure. Comparisons were made for the grade equivalent scores of first-grade students and third-grade students on reading, language, and vocabulary subtests. The results of these analyses are found in Table 8.

Table 8

Elementary Reading Alignment
Summary Data
1991 ITBS Reading, Language, and Vocabulary Tests
Analysis of Variance
with High Implementing and Low Implementing Schools

Test Grade	Schools Low Implementing (LO)	 High Implementing (HI)	Probability	Groups
Reading				
First	1.8	2.1	.00*	HI > LO[1]
Third	3.4	3.5	.56	
Language				
First	2.2	2.7	.00*	HI > LO
Third	3.9	4.2	.00*	HI > LO
Vocabulary				
First	1.9	2.4	.00*	HI > LO
Third	3.5	3.9	.00*	HI > LO

Note: Analysis was done using grade equivalents. Mean grade equivalents were rounded to the nearest tenth. Probabilities were rounded to the nearest hundredth.

* Indicates significance at at least the .05 level.

1 The group or groups presented to the left of the " > " (greater than) sign scored significantly higher than the group or groups presented to the right of the sign. For example, when high implementing schools have scores that are significantly higher than those of the low implementing schools, the entry reads HI > LO.

As can be seen from the table, with the exception of the reading subtest at the third-grade level, each procedure showed a significant difference between scores of students from low implementing schools and scores of students from high implementing schools, with the scores of students from the schools which showed a greater degree of implementation of the Reading Alignment Program being higher.

Table 9 shows the Missouri Mastery and Achievement Tests (MMAT) average scale scores in the area of reading/language arts, tracing the scores from 1987, the first year the test was used, through 1991. With the exception of 1990, the district's scores have improved from the previous year. In 1991, the district's score (274) reestablished the 1989 level (275). Even when the district's scores have improved, they have not kept pace with the improvements of the state as a whole. As can be seen from the table, the difference

Table 9

Elementary Reading Alignment
Comparison of State and District MMAT
Reading/Language Arts Average Scale Scores
Grade Three

Level	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
State	300	315	328	323	321
District	258	268	275	267	274
Difference	42	47	53	56	47

between state and district scores increased each year until the current year, when the gap returned to the same level it had been in 1988 (47). The *Missouri Mastery and Achievement Tests, Guide to Score Interpretation and Use* (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1990) indicates that a difference of 25 or more scaled score points represents a meaningful difference when comparing groups of students. Using that guideline, a meaningful difference continues to exist between district and state scores, with district scores being lower.

Conclusions and Recommendations

During the past three years, other district priorities have diverted attention from the Reading Alignment Program. Mechanisms for reading leadership to address school leadership diminished and funding for in-service training was reduced. During the most recent school year, funding was not available for duplication of basic Reading Alignment materials (district curriculum guides and Reading Alignment procedural manuals). The alignment was made based on items from a now outdated form of the ITBS. The major revisions needed to align the reading program with the new form were not completed. Further complicating matters for the program, a new textbook series was adopted in the spring of 1991 for use in the 1991-1992 school year. Because of this, there was little incentive to encourage implementation of the Reading Alignment Program during this last year of use for the old basal series.

In comparison with the previous summative evaluation (Nelson, 1988), no improvement was seen in the percentage of schools in which all teachers used the CMI system. A slight slippage was noted in the percentage of manuals which were accurately marked.

One of the purposes of the alignment process was to reduce the skills teachers were required to teach. It appears, however, from teacher self-report, that a third of the teachers are continuing to teach most, if not all, of the skills covered in the reading manuals.

CMI operators reported satisfaction with support for the CMI system and with system itself. A marked improvement in availability of the system was noted in comparison to the previous summative evaluation. During the 1990-1991 school year, only a quarter of the CMI operators reported that the system had been out of service for any length of time. In 1987-1988, two-thirds of the operators indicated that the system had been out of service.

Schools with evidence of a high level of implementation of the Reading Alignment Program were compared to schools with a low level of implementation. Reading, language, and vocabulary ITBS scores of the two groups were compared at the first- and third-grade levels. Results indicated that students from high implementation schools significantly outperformed students from low implementation schools at both grade levels and for all three tests, with the exception of reading at the third-grade level, for which there was no significant difference between the two groups.

With the results of the study in mind, the following recommendations are made:

1. When a program is instituted in the district, provide the support it needs to be implemented. During the past three years, the energy and resources necessary to implement this program as it was designed were funneled away from the Reading Alignment Program to other district priorities. The result for the Reading Alignment Program was that the aligned skills were never updated to match the new form of the ITBS test, the IMPACT phase of the program was not fully implemented, the ADVANCE phase received no attention, and basic materials necessary for implementing even the most fundamental AFIRM phase were not available for distribution to classroom teachers. While the nature of this program will change considerably in the coming year because of a change in the reading strategy of the district based on the newly adopted basal series, the district as a whole can learn from what has happened to this program during its tenure in the system to this point. Devoting five reading resource teachers to the implementation of the new Reading Alignment Program, as program leadership hoped, could be one way of supporting this program as it moves into a new strategy in response to the adopted basal series.
2. Protect the scheduled reading time in schools. Since reading is a priority and since a strong emphasis is placed on reading scores on the ITBS, scheduled reading time should be protected by teachers and instructional leadership

within the school. This study turned up mixed readings regarding the extent to which reading time is currently being protected. While observations found reading activities taking place as scheduled in all of the classrooms visited, a third of the teachers indicated that their scheduled reading time was disrupted for other activities once a week or more.

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APPENDIX A

INDICATORS OF IMPLEMENTATION
FOR THE
READING ALIGNMENT PROGRAM

Indicators of Implementation

for the

Reading Alignment Program

First Priority (weight 3)

Marked reading manuals

Set schedule for reading instruction (followed)

All teachers have copies of curriculum materials (yellow and purple documents)

Regular use of CMI (at least bi-weekly for first and second grades and every three weeks for third through fifth grades)

All teachers using CMI

Teachers reporting that they cover all the story lessons

Second Priority (weight 2)

Independent recreational reading

Literary environment (at least 50 books, variety of children's magazines, newspapers, reference works)

Set schedule for library use (followed)

CMI turn-around time (24 hours or less, as reported by teachers)

Third Priority (weight 1)

One whole-class, grade level lesson each week

Use of item analysis from ITBS to plan weekly lesson (after Dec. 1)

Teachers reporting that they teach less than all the basal skills

Detractors (weight 1)

Frequent use of reading worksheets (other than the basal workbook)Appendix A